

REMARKS

Responsive to the first Office action, applicant has amended the specification and claims, and as a result, requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims. In the Office action, the Examiner objected to the disclosure and drawings. First, the Examiner noted that element 21 in Figure 6 was identified in the description of drawings, but not in the detailed description. By the above-identified amendment, applicant has clarified that element 21 of Figure 6 is “additional material which may be laminated or otherwise added to at least one side of the stringer for increased strength or rigidity.” The basis for this amendment is the original drawing, specification and claims 6 and 7.

The Examiner also objected to the drawings because he concluded that they did not show all claimed features of the invention. However, by the above-identified amendment to the description (with respect to element 21), applicant has so clarified the nature of element 21, which pertains to the subject matter recited in claims 6 and 7.

Turning now to the Examiner’s claim objections, applicant has responded to the informalities raised by the Examiner (concerning method claims) by the amendments to claims 6 and 7. In addition, the Examiner’s rejection of claim 5 under § 112, second paragraph is now moot because that claim has been canceled without prejudice.

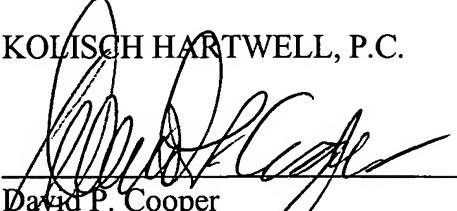
Turning now to the Examiner’s prior-art based rejections, the § 102(b) rejection of claims 1 and 3-5 under U.S. Patent No. 2,879,556 to Lyons is now moot because those claims have been canceled without prejudice. In addition, the Examiner’s § 103(a) rejection of claim 2 based upon Lyons and U.S. Patent No. 3,196,997 to Hager is also moot because claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice.

The Examiner also rejected claims 6 and 7 as being unpatentable under § 103(a) based upon the combination of Lyons and U.S. Patent No. 485,449 to Borneman et al. However, applicant disagrees that Lyons or Borneman et al. show or suggest to provide a step support system with, as recited by amended claim 6, "material laminated on at least one side of the step-support body" or, as recited by amended claim 7, "providing a surface whereby finished or structural materials can be attached to the underside of stairs." Lyons shows no structure to be attached to the steps. Borneman et al. shows neither a step-support body nor material laminated to a step-support body.

Accordingly, for the above-identified reasons, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of pending claims 6 and 7. If there are any questions regarding this matter, please telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

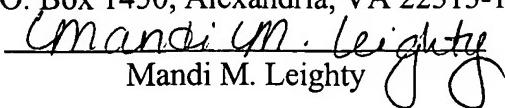
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: MAIL STOP: AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on February 16, 2005.


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